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Top Secret 233
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_____ NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE _____

_____ Saturday November 27, 1976 _____ CI NIDC 76-277C _____

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Saturday November 27, 1976.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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RHODESIA: Geneva Deadlock Broken

[] The British chairman at the Geneva conference announced yesterday that agreement finally had been reached on the issue of the date for Rhodesia's independence, on which the conference has been stalled.

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[] Joshua Nkomo, who with his "patriotic front" partner Robert Mugabe had opposed the UK's formulation on the date issue, announced that the British had accepted two amendments proposed by the front. Although the amendments were not announced, Rhodesia apparently is to gain its formal independence from the UK no later than March 1, 1978.

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[] The other nationalists participating in the talks, Bishop Muzorewa and Ndabaningi Sithole, had earlier indicated their acceptance of the March date, as did Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith.

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[] The Geneva conference should now be able to move on to substantive questions dealing with the formation of a transition government and the British role during the transition. There is every indication, however, that these issues will be even thornier than the independence date.

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SPAIN: Reform Goals

[] With the Spanish reform bill safely through the Cortes, Prime Minister Suarez must now try to get the non-communist opposition to participate in the democratic processes established by the new law.

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[] The government has two immediate goals: to persuade as many opposition parties as possible to signify their endorsement of the reforms by applying for legalization, and to head off an opposition campaign for abstentions in the referendum scheduled for December 15.

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[] The broad lines of the government's campaign were laid down earlier this week by Interior Minister Martin Villa, who told a press conference that only officially approved parties will be allowed to participate fully in the referendum campaign and that proscribed political parties--Communists and left-wing extremists--will be denied any role.

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[] The Socialists, Christian Democrats, and other left-of-center parties, which have not yet applied for legalization, will be restricted to holding indoor meetings and denied access to television and other government-controlled media.

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[] Failure of the left-of-center parties to apply for legalization is partly a gesture of solidarity with the Communists, who are likely to remain banned at least until after the legislative election next spring. It is also an expression of the parties' displeasure at not being fully consulted on the reforms and their reservations about the government's commitment to free and fair elections.

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[] The leftist parties will probably seek to use the question of their full legal participation as a bargaining chip when they try to persuade the government to negotiate with them on the law governing parliamentary elections.

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[] The government's hard line on restricting the freedom of non-legalized parties in the referendum campaign may be a negotiating ploy. If, on the other hand, the government is

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[redacted]

serious about stifling the leftist abstention drive, it may find the approach counterproductive; heavy-handed action by security forces could unite the opposition at a time when it is showing signs of splintering. The government may also be vulnerable to accusations of manipulating the referendum.

[redacted] There are signs that the more moderate opposition groups are uncomfortable with the move--led by the Communists and the Socialist Workers Party--to campaign aggressively for abstention unless various demands, including legalization of the Communist Party, are met. Two leaders of the small Popular Socialist Party recently told the US ambassador that they believe it is unwise to expend resources opposing the referendum when the government is certain to win anyway.

[redacted] In any case, the Popular Socialist leaders said they believe the election next year is far more important than the referendum. They believe the more moderate groups will probably concentrate on efforts to ensure a fair legislative election, leaving participation in the referendum up to each party member.

[redacted] Opposition figures such as these may now push for the appointment of three or four "wise men" as ministers without portfolio to act as a channel for negotiations on the election law and to supervise the election process itself. This theme was recently touched on in a press interview by Christian Democrat Ruiz Gimenez, who suggested that the "wise men" need not be leaders of the opposition--they could be eminent jurists and experts on election law who have the confidence of the opposition.

[redacted]

[redacted] The government is likely to open consultations soon with leaders of the non-communist opposition in an effort to persuade them that they should not be so adamant in their support for legalization of the Communist Party that they jeopardize not only their own political futures but the country's progress toward democracy as well.

[redacted] The major socialist group, the Socialist Workers Party, is in a particularly awkward position. Because it is competing with the Communists for workers' votes, it is especially vulnerable to accusations of selling out to the government. This is probably the main reason it is pushing for abstention in the referendum.

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[redacted] Government officials recognize the party's dilemma. Because they see the party as a key factor in the struggle to involve the non-communist opposition in the reform program, they have privately expressed a willingness to lean over backward to win its cooperation. A Socialist Workers Party congress, now scheduled for December 5-8, is likely to receive government authorization. In addition, the government is reportedly considering a modification of the law that would allow the Socialists to become legalized without having to swear allegiance to Francoist institutions.

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YUGOSLAVIA-USSR: Relations

[] Belgrade's initial expressions of satisfaction with the results of General Secretary Brezhnev's visit last week are giving way to more negative commentary.

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[] President Tito's "state of the state" message to the Yugoslav parliament yesterday ended with Tito indicting those who "feign concern" about the fate of Yugoslav socialism and try to obstruct and endanger the country's independence. This phrasing clashes with his warm words for the Soviets during Brezhnev's visit.

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[] Tito's speech did not specifically mention Brezhnev, but Stane Dolanc, the number two man in the Yugoslav Communist Party, left no question about the target of the complaints. Dolanc, in a speech interrupted by applause, quoted Tito as telling Brezhnev that the Soviets must "once and for all" understand and accept Yugoslavia's independence.

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[] Dolanc went on to express confidence that Moscow would follow through on Brezhnev's promises, but he clearly implied there is still a long way to go. He also stressed that Yugoslavia belongs to the nonaligned movement and cannot be drawn into any military bloc.

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[] These forceful reassertions of Yugoslav independence apparently were prompted by press commentaries from Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria that portrayed Brezhnev's visit as a successful consolidation of the international "socialist community." A well-informed Yugoslav radio commentator on Tuesday scored Prague and Sofia for ignoring Brezhnev's public reaffirmations of Yugoslavia's right to be different. The commentator's attack almost certainly came at official behest. []

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WARSAW PACT: Political Committee Session

[] The communique summarizing the two-day meeting of the Warsaw Pact's Political Consultative Committee in Bucharest announced the creation of two new organizational substructures--a committee of Pact foreign ministers and a joint secretariat. The functions of the new bodies are not spelled out in the communique, but they probably will be empowered to act on behalf of Pact members only when there is a consensus.

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[] The USSR has long wanted to establish a permanent secretariat--presumably with a strong Soviet secretary general--but Romania has resisted because of fears that the Soviets would try to use the secretariat to restrict its foreign policy initiatives. This time Bucharest may have concluded that establishment of a secretariat was inevitable, and as a trade-off pressed for the creation of the foreign ministers' committee.

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[] According to the communique, party leaders and heads of government from all Pact member countries agreed on "fundamental problems" of world policy--a broad formulation that presumably satisfies Moscow's desire to stress the "unity" of its views with those of its East European allies.

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[] The communique masked Soviet-Romanian differences apparent earlier this week during Brezhnev's official visit to Romania. During the bilateral exchanges, Brezhnev had emphasized the East's "constant initiative" in implementing provisions of the Helsinki accords and extolled specific Soviet proposals on disarmament, implicitly criticizing the West for not having responded positively. By contrast, Ceausescu had complained that "few practical measures" have been taken to implement the Helsinki accords and called for "concrete action."

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[] The Consultative Committee session--the first such gathering since 1974--also addressed the subjects of disarmament and European security. Looking ahead to the follow-on meeting on the Helsinki accords, scheduled for next year in Belgrade, the group issued a declaration on "international detente" and adopted a draft treaty pledging signatories not to initiate the use of nuclear weapons against each other. Both documents will be sent to all participants in the Helsinki talks for their consideration. []

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THAILAND-CAMBODIA: Border Clashes

[] Border clashes have erupted again along Thailand's southeastern border with Cambodia, and the new government in Bangkok is seeking to negotiate to avoid wider fighting. Preliminary discussions between Thai and Cambodian liaison officials, reportedly under way at a border post, are intended to pave the way for higher level negotiations.

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[] //Low-level skirmishes on the border between Cambodia and the Thai province of Trat have been occurring since the beginning of the month. Shots reportedly have been exchanged both in land areas where the border is not precisely defined and in the Gulf of Thailand.//

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[] //Neither side has suffered heavy casualties, but the Thai became concerned after the Cambodians, reportedly using artillery, attacked a Thai border police station on Thursday. The Thai navy responded by shelling Cambodian positions on the island of Koh Kong, and the cabinet in Bangkok decided it was time to start talks.// []

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INDIA-BANGLADESH: Ganges Water Issue

[] India and Bangladesh agreed at the UN this week to resume bilateral negotiations on their dispute over allocation of the waters of the Ganges River. New talks at the ministerial level are to begin in Dacca in early December.

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[] Bangladesh brought the dispute to the UN this fall in hopes of lining up international pressure on India to reach an agreement that would meet Bangladesh's demand for a larger share of Ganges waters. In 1975 India inaugurated the Farakka Barrage--located 20 kilometers upriver from the India-Bangladesh border--which gave the Indians the ability to control the distribution of the lower Ganges. The Bangladeshis claim the portion of river water they now receive is insufficient for agricultural and navigational needs.

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[] Numerous bilateral efforts over the past year have failed to produce a mutually acceptable compromise, and Bangladesh is anxious to reach an agreement before the next dry season, which Dacca considers to begin as early as January.

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[] India strongly opposes third party intervention or arbitration in what it views as a strictly bilateral affair. At the UN, Indian representatives lobbied actively against Bangladesh's efforts to secure adoption of a resolution on the issue. The two sides finally accepted a compromise consensus statement providing for the resumption of bilateral talks. Under the compromise formula either side can bring the matter back to the UN if the new bilateral talks fail.

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[] There is a fair chance that India and Bangladesh may agree on arrangements to cover the coming dry season. Relations between the two countries are complicated, however, by mutual suspicions and disputes over other issues, such as Indian support for some Bangladeshi dissidents. []

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NATO: Arms Procurement

[] //The eleven members of the European Program Group, meeting in Rome this week, have signaled their readiness to begin discussions with the US and Canada aimed at enhancing Europe's capability to produce weapons for use by the NATO allies.//

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[] //The move came despite French protests that such talks ought to be deferred until European collaborative arrangements are more advanced. France has been unable to persuade the other members to agree to organizational arrangements that would give the one-year-old Program Group a dominant role in the arms collaboration effort.//

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[] //The prospective discussions with the US and Canada are intended to lead to joint agreement on "defense procurement issues of mutual interest." Specific production proposals would then be presented to members of the Group for decision.//

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 //The forum proposed for the discussions is the Conference of National Armaments Directors--a body not formally tied to NATO that includes the principal arms procurement officials from NATO countries. France is a full member of the Conference, which was set up in 1966 when France withdrew from NATO's integrated military command. 

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